

## SERVICE CENTER UPDATE

## Service Centers all around town...



Okeechobee Service Center staffers Lora Gardner (far left) and Allison Murphy (blue shirt) use an EnviroScape Model to visually demonstrate how each person contributes to world-wide water resource concerns.

## Okeechobee Service Center

**Students celebrate World Water Monitoring Day**

More than 150 students from Osceola Middle School, along with staff from the District, tested four key indicators of water quality (temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and turbidity) as part of the Oct. 18 World Water Monitoring Day program. Agriculture students gained an understanding and appreciation of the involvement that each person shares in protecting the water quality within their local watershed. Test results were posted on the Internet along with other world-wide results. Staff also provided guidance and testing kits to the Ecology Club at Moore Haven High School, who also participated in this annual event.

**Grassy Island Ranch partnership**

The District recently formed a partnership with Okeechobee High School that will allow the school's agriculture department to teach best management practices (BMPs) for cattle operations on a site easily viewed by the residents of this agricultural community. The 4,700-acre Grassy Island Ranch was acquired by the District in 2001 for use as part of the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Reservoir-Assisted Stormwater Treatment Area, a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan's Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project. The school board has signed a 30-year lease agreement on the property, which fronts on U.S. Highway 441 north of the city of Okeechobee.

## Lower West Coast Service Center

**District participates in regional legislative agenda**

State Rep. Mike Davis of Naples is spearheading the development of a regional, Southwest Florida, legislative agenda for the 2005 legislative session. The goal is to develop consensus among legislators on items that can be supported by all on a regional basis. To help develop that consensus, Rep. Davis established "Issues '05: Southwest Regional Delegation Forum," which was held Dec. 10 at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Members of the Southwest Florida Legislative Delegation gathered for a day of discussion regarding key issues of regional importance in Southwest Florida. Presentations and discussion focused on education, the economy, growth management, natural resources and transportation, as well as legislative initiatives that may impact these issues during the 2005 legislative session.

South Florida Water Management District Deputy Executive Director of Land and West Coast Resources Pam Mac'Kie and Conservancy of Southwest Florida Policy Director Gary Davis have been tasked by Rep. Davis to co-chair the Natural Resources Committee. In order to get public input into setting the agenda for natural resources, a symposium of stakeholders and citizens was held Oct. 27 at the Lower West Coast Service Center in Fort Myers. Participants from all over the five-county region representing environmental groups, agriculture, development, and public agencies attended to discuss issues and to prioritize needs.

## Big Cypress Basin Service Center

**Melanie the Manatee Award presented**

The Big Cypress Basin Board presented the "Melanie the Manatee Award" for 2004 to Ricky Pires of Florida Gulf Coast University in October. The award, named and fashioned after the mascot of the Big Cypress Basin, is meant to recognize city or county agencies, developments, schools or individuals that have contributed toward improvement, protection and conservation of water resources in Collier County.

Pires is the creator of the Wings of Hope Program, part of the Connections class for sophomore level students at FGCU. As a part of the program, the college students work with elementary school students to learn about the Everglades, the estuaries, and Florida wildlife, with an emphasis on the Florida panther.

Throughout her presentations, Pires includes information on many of the District's priorities, including water conservation, water supply, coastal systems, Everglades restoration and Lake Okeechobee.

## Miami-Dade Service Center

**Community educated on water quality issues**

The District participated in the National Lead Awareness week activities at Morningside Elementary School in the neighborhood of Little Haiti in Miami.

The first annual community lead walk was part of the Miami-Dade Weed



Captivated children take turns asking Miami-Dade Service Center staffer Joseph Jean-Baptiste questions at Morningside Elementary School.

and Seed Lead Prevention Program, which was established to keep Miami-Dade communities safe through action and awareness. The District was among the various environmental agencies lending its support to this late October event.

Protecting water quality is part of the District's mission, and this is enhanced when the community takes steps to keep water resources clean.

**District gives \$200,000 to Miami Gardens**

The South Florida Water Management District is committed to being a good neighbor. We ensure that local perspectives are incorporated into District activities through our intergovernmental communication, cooperation and coordination efforts, vital to successfully meeting the water resource needs of our communities. At the Miami-Dade Service Center, these efforts were recently appreciated. In early December, the South Florida Water Management presented the City of Miami Gardens with a check for \$200,000 for the city's Storm Water Master Planning projects.

Pictured here, from left: Commissioner Oscar Braynon II, Commissioner Aaron Campbell Jr., Miami-Dade Service Center Director Jose Fuentes, Commissioner Audrey J. King, State Sen. Frederica S. Wilson, Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson, State Rep. Wilbert "Tee" Holloway, Commissioner Sharon Pritchett, Commissioner Melvin L. Bratton, and Commissioner Barbara Watson.



## Martin/St. Lucie Service Center

**2005 Indian River Lagoon calendar available**

Take a pictorial tour of the Indian River Lagoon with the 2005 Indian River Lagoon calendar featuring images by the winners of the Indian River Lagoon photography contest. Sponsored by the St. Johns River Water Management District, South Florida Water Management District, Environmental Protection Agency National Estuary Program, and Environmental Consulting and Technology Inc., which donated all of the prize money, the annual contest attracts local photographers to the natural scenic vistas of the Indian River Lagoon. From a nesting yellow crowned night heron to gentle manatees to a hungry otter enjoying his catch, you'll discover why ongoing efforts to protect, preserve and restore this national treasure are critical.

The free calendars (quantities limited) are available at the Martin/St. Lucie Service Center, 210 Atlanta Ave., Stuart, or by calling Diane Jensen at (772) 223-2600, Ext. 3601.

## Broward Service Center

**Environmental educators honored**

The District co-sponsored the 2004 Broward County Environmental Educators Awards held Oct. 15 at the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame in Dania Beach. Sponsored by the Broward County Environmental Education Committee, the yearly event recognizes individuals who have demonstrated environmental awareness and have worked to educate youth and members of the public about environmental issues within the county. District Governing Board Vice-Chair Pamela Brooks-Thomas reiterated the agency's commitment to environmental education.

## Orlando Service Center

**District partnership continues to be a success**

In 1992, with major projects on its drawing boards requiring environmental mitigation, the Walt Disney Company entered into a unique partnership with The Nature Conservancy, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to create the Disney Wilderness Preserve.

In November 2004, the partners gathered to celebrate the success of the Preserve. The Preserve has grown from an original 8,500 acres to 12,000 acres as other developers added adjacent lands to meet their mitigation requirements.

The Disney Wilderness Preserve continues to set a standard for ecosystem mitigation. It is also playing important state, national and international roles as a platform for the study of key conservation issues, such as environmental restoration, fire management, ecosystem management, listed species recovery, volunteer programs and environmental education.